ADVICE/BRIEFS

HOME IMPROVEMENT

Cold weather fixes for your skin and joints

TRUDY CHUOKE
Happy Handyman

That title might not be exactly what you think, I'm thinking skin repair. I don't know about you, but the minute cold weather sets in for more than two days, my skin is on fire. I'm sure that hot showers don't help. But once my skin gets inflamed, there is no going back, until the 75 degree weather hits. I know I am a couple of months away from that. So, if your skin is like mine, let me make a suggestion. Use Medline Skin Repair Creme.

Medline is a product we originally found when dad was in the hospital. At dad's age his skin was so thin that is would tear if he just bumped it. A nurse came in and noticed dad's arms and brought back Medline. A quick application and it soothed his skin and helped with healing.

If the cold weather has your joints aching try Two Old Goats. It's a light lotion that smells like eucalyptus. You can apply Two Old Goats as often as you would like. It comes in three sizes, from a 2 ounce to an 8 ounce. My mom used Two Old Goats for three years before she had to have knee surgery. She still uses it if that knee starts to ache.

So, if your skin is making you miserable or your joints here are so non-prescriptive ways that work.

Tip of the week ...

Do you like to leave a key outdoors in case you get locked out? Well don't put it under the mat or that fake rock, let the birds take care of it. Yes, get yourself a pretty birdhouse and put it in the backyard and hide a key inside. Of if you have a dog, under the doghouse.

Now to the email ...

Question: Trudy, I'm seeing commercials for dishwasher soap that says using the dish washer uses less water than hand washing is that true? Is it advisable to unplug the toaster between uses? How often do toasters, or other appliances, actually catch fire when not in use? I enjoy your articles in the Houston Chronicle. Thanks for your help!

Answer: It's hard to believe but the newer models do use less water. I know when you hear the dishwasher going, it's hard to believe, but it is just using an average of three gallons. Plus, it heats its own water. Even if you have an older model, it uses less water. It's just convenient sometimes to quickly rinse and clean a pan. The best dishwasher detergent is Cascade Platinum. My dishwasher is a second hand one (remember my brother-in-law's gift) and I use that brand and my dishes come out shining. If your dishwasher is not doing a good job, it's probably not the detergent. Try cleaning your dishwasher with Dishwasher Magic. It works better than any other cleaner.

About your second question. I've got two stories. My mom unplugs her toaster and her coffee pot each morning after breakfast. Her coffee pot had a meltdown one day after she left for work, so she is super careful. In San Antonio, CPS will start calling when the weather starts heating up and customers are starting to use more energy. So, they will call once a week and let you know where you are in the neighborhood.... like #20 or #40 in being conservative. Well, I have an employee who took that on as a competitive event. You know like the Olympics! She wanted to be #1 in her neighborhood. Well after a couple of weeks, she was. She unplugged ever device in her house. From lamps, TVs, and everything but the refrigerator. I thought it was a little extreme, but it makes you realize how much all those devices pull even when you are not using them.

If you need more information, please call or write.

If you have trouble finding an item to purchase, we can ship it to your door!

Email Trudy Chuoke Lesage at happyhandyman2 @yahoo.com.

HEALTH CARE

Medicare premiums become too expensive

TONI KING
Medicare

Toni

My Medicare begins March 1 and I have received my first bill. This bill is for four months from March 1 to June 30. I thought Medicare was monthly. If I pay this amount, then I cannot pay my rent for March.

This bill for Medicare is due Feb. 25 and I was wondering if Medicare allows payments for Medicare Part B premium monthly? I cannot start my Social Security check because I work and make more than Social Security allows without having to pay a penalty because I am not at my full retirement age (FRA). Jackie, The Woodlands, TX

Jackie:

You are correct that Americans are paying their Medicare premiums monthly by having the premium taken from their Social Security check. Social Security will automatically take the Medicare premiums from a person's Social Security check. Social Security will send a letter informing the Medicare beneficiary that Social Security is deducting the monthly Medicare Part B premiums from your Social Security check.

Google "Medicare Easy Pay" to pay your Medicare premiums monthly from your checking account or visit www.medicare.gov and you can research topics such as how to download and properly set up Medicare Easy Pay.

Not computer or internet "smart" to research options on Google? Then get help from a family member or friend that has access to a computer and ask them to assist you in downloading the "Medicare Easy Pay" form.

It may take about six to eight weeks to have the "Medicare Easy Pay" form processed. You should make sure that you keep up with your monthly premiums, so your Medicare Parts A and B are not terminated. A simple way to pay a monthly premium or your complete Medicare premium bill by credit card until the Medicare Easy Pay form is activated is by visiting www.Medicare.com and create a Medicare account.

When creating a Medicare account, you must have applied for Medicare and have your Medicare number to open your account. On your Medicare account is your Medicare information such as:

What Medicare Part D prescription drug plan or Medicare Advantage plan you are enrolled in.

What your Medicare Part A and B enrollment dates are.

What you can view on your "Medicare.gov" account is paying your Medicare premium, Medicare claims, print your Medicare card and much more.

If one does not stay current with their Medicare premiums, then the Medicare Beneficiary might lose their benefits and may be charged a penalty when they re-enroll. When someone does not have the required 40 working quarters to qualify for Medicare or are married with a spouse that does have the 40 quarters, then they may also have to pay a premium for Part A which is expensive.

Medicare Part D prescription drug premiums are not available via the Medicare site but are managed by the Medicare Part D prescription drug company. One can pay their Medicare

prescription drug premium either directly to the prescription drug company by check or credit card. Once one begins receiving their Social Security check, then both Medicare Part B and Part D prescription drug premiums can be taken from their Social Security check.

Many do not realize that they can pay their Part B premiums monthly when not receiving their Social Security check by following the rules set up by Medicare.

A Confused about Medicare Zoom webinar is Thursday, Feb. 10, at 4 p.m. Visit www.tonisays-.com to sign up.

BAY AREA BRIEFS

Staff and students at Clear View High School are exploring new classrooms, labs and gathering areas after an 18-month campus rebuild.

The new facility, built next to the old building at 400 S. Walnut St., increases capacity from 250 to 350 students and includes accommodations for cosmetology, certified nursing assistant and welding programs.

Projected to cost $45,162,961, the Clear View rebuild finished about $5 million under budget, according to Clear Creek Independent School District.

The original building was built in 1938. Its Art Deco main entrance remains on school grounds and will be preserved. A rededication ceremony will take place later this semester. Learn more at www.ccisd.net/school-bonds.

Courtesy Motiva

Representatives from the Pasadena Office of Emergency Management and Pasadena Volunteer Fire Department receive $11,500 in grant awards Jan. 19 from Motiva Enterprises.

Courtesy A New Dawn

Volunteers at A New Dawn Pet Adoption, 202 W. San Augustine St., Deer Park, say they'd like to pair 9-month-old schnauzer mix Sweet Pea with a patient, loving person. Sweet Pea's puppy contract requires her return to A New Dawn for final vaccinations and spay surgery. Learn more at www.anewdawnpetadoption.org and www.facebook.com/anewdawnpetadoption.

Elta Ceole Speight

1928 ~ 2022

Elta Ceole Branam Speight
June 8, 1928 – January 24, 2022

Born in Toro, Louisiana, but a resident of Pasadena, Texas most of her life. Ceole was preceded in death by her husband of 63 years, Joseph Walker Speight Jr., sons Kenneth Walker Speight and Calvin Brett Speight, son-in-law Bill Arnold, and great-grandson, Jordan Andrew.

She is survived by daughter, Jeanne Arnold, daughter-in-law Linda Speight, son Glenn Speight and wife Marilyn, daughter-in-law Charlene Speight; grandchildren, Kevin Bullard and wife Gina, Kyle Bullard and wife Melissa, Mark Speight and wife Blanca, Dennis Speight and wife Emily, Keri Bullard, Angela Speight, Genni Stevenson and husband Justin, April Speight, and Nicole Rossi and husband Jonny; 28 great-grandchildren, Kevin, Karlie, Ciara, Gage, Dylan, John, Ty, Brooklyn, Michael, Sofia, Benjamin, Sky, Diego, Zoe, Evan, Zane, Kimber, Rayne, Breylin, Jalen, Ethan, Logyn, Kaedynce, Ellie, Jax, Zander, Arya, and Raven; and 7 great-great-grandchildren: Joe, Emma, Kennedy, Wren, Piper, Kira, and Harper.

Ceole retired from the Harris County AFL-CIO in 2008, after serving 40 years as the VIP Director. In the labor movement, she guided and mentored thousands of union members and aspiring politicians. The Harris County AFL-CIO Council building was dedicated in her honor as the Ceole Speight House of Labor in 2010 and she was inducted into the Texas Labor Union Hall of Fame in 2013.

She will be remembered as a strong Democratic woman that fought for what she believed in, serving as a delegate to many precinct, state and national conventions and as the State Democratic Executive Committeewoman from Senate District 11. As the undisputed ambassador for the Harris County labor movement, many politicians sought her wise counsel. She was also appointed to Governor Mark White's Women's Commission of Texas.

She meant so much to so many. She loved her family and left a legacy that will live on through them for many years to come.

For those considering ways to honor her - she was a big believer in education - please consider making a donation in her memory to the "Texas AFL-CIO Scholarship Fund". Please include her name in the memo line and mail to PO Box 12727, Austin, TX 78711-2727.

Area students graduate, earn academic honors at UA

Lillian Presley, of Friendswood, has earned a bachelor's degree in computer science from the University of Alabama.

The school awarded 2,362 degrees during fall commencement ceremonies Dec. 10 and 11, 2021.

Additionally, Friendswood natives Avery Evans and Joscelin O'Connor achieved an academic record of 4.0, or all A's, and were named to the fall 2021 president's list.

Leah Block, also of Friendswood, achieved an academic record of at least 3.5 and was named to the dean's list.

To learn more about the school in Tuscaloosa, visit news.ua.edu.

Friendswood-area student earns academic recognition at Mount Union

Laura Sant'anna Sasaki, of Houston, has been named to the fall 2021 dean's list at the University of Mount Union in Alliance, Ohio.

Sant'anna Sasaki was one of 636 students named to the list. To be eligible, students must have completed at least 12 credit hours while achieving a GPA of 3.550 or better. Learn more at www.mountunion.edu.

Softball league recruiting

The Bay Area Senior Softball Association is seeking men and women age 50 and older for slow-pitch games.

League games are played Tuesday and Wednesday mornings at Kipper Mease Park, 10700 Red Bluff Road.

The spring season runs March 1 to June 1, and the fall season will start in September. For details, contact Jack Boykin, jboykin4@comcast.net, or Ted Brenneman, tedbrenneman@yahoo.com.

Nonprofit wins $200,000 to aid oral health efforts

Pasadena Health Center, 908 Southmore Ave., recently received $200,000 in funding from the Delta Dental Community Care Foundation.

The center will use the funds to offer oral screenings and fluoride treatments to older adults and underserved communities, Pasadena Health Center CEO John Sweitzer said.

"In order to use the funds in the most appropriate way we are concentrating on low-income people over the age of 65," Sweitzer said. "The center is supplying these people who qualify with two free cleanings, which can include a deep cleaning. We are also offering fillings and at least one extraction. With Medicare plans not always offering dental plans, it is important that people have access to care."

Learn more at pasadenahealthcenter-.com.

Property tax deferral available

Texas homeowners may postpone paying delinquent property taxes on the appreciating value of their homes by filing a tax deferral affidavit at the Harris County Appraisal District, according to a statement from the office.

The residence homestead deferral allows homeowners to pay taxes on 105 percent of the preceding year's appraised value of their homestead plus taxes on new improvements. The remaining taxes are postponed, not canceled, with interest accruing at 8 percent a year. Visit www.hcad.org for details.

Refining company presents $11,500 to area emergency responders

The Pasadena Office of Emergency Management and Pasadena Volunteer Fire Department received grant awards totaling $11,500 from Motiva Enterprises Jan. 19.

The OEM will use a $6,500 grant to purchase drones, while the fire department has earmarked its $5,000 to purchase incident response

Learn more at motiva.com/community/grants.